
**MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN (MAP)
REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)**

11th Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional
Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre
for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

REMPEC/WG.37/4
Date: 10 June 2015

Malta, 15-17 June 2015

Original: English

Agenda Item 4

PROGRESS REPORT ON REMPEC'S ACTIVITIES
SINCE THE 10TH MEETING OF THE FOCAL POINTS OF REMPEC

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This document contains an outline of the activities carried out by the Centre since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC held in Malta in May 2011.

Action to be taken: Paragraph 81

Related documents: UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.17/10, UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.19/8, UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.20/8, UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.21/9, REMPEC/WG.34/19/Rev.1, REMPEC/WG.35/4, REMPEC/WG.35/6, REMPEC/WG.36/4, REMPEC/WG.36/5, REMPEC/WG.36/6, UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.417/5/Corr.1, REMPEC/WG.37/7, REMPEC/WG.37/8, REMPEC/WG.37/9, REMPEC/WG.37/10, REMPEC/WG.37/11/1, REMPEC/WG.37/11/2, REMPEC/WG.37/14/1, REMPEC/WG.37/15, REMPEC/WG.37/INF.3

Introduction

1 This report covers the period April 2011 – May 2015, that is to say activities conducted after the Tenth Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), which was held in Malta from 3 to 5 May 2011, and before the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Ordinary Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (“the Barcelona Convention”) and its Protocols, which were convened in Paris, France, from 8 to 10 February 2012 and in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 6 December 2013, respectively, as well as the activities carried out after the said Meetings based on the approved Programme of Work of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for the biennium 2014/2015.

2 This report is divided under the following headings:

- I. Report on Institutional Developments;
- II. Report on Administrative and Other Related Issues; and
- III. Report on the Implementation of Activities.

3 It is recalled that the Centre was not in a position to hold its Meeting of Focal Points in 2013 due to lack of funds. However, it should be noted that the MAP Components, including REMPEC, were requested to prepare their proposals for the MAP Programme of Work for the biennium 2014/2015 on the same allocation of funds from the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF) as for the Programme of Work for the biennium 2012/2013. As mentioned at the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, the said allocation has not been reviewed since 2003.

I. REPORT ON INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Ratification of the Protocols

4 Since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, Morocco and Israel have ratified the Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea ("the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol"), on 26 April 2011 and 10 September 2014, respectively.

5 Following the ratification of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil ("the Offshore Protocol") by the Syrian Arab Republic on 22 February 2011, the Offshore Protocol entered into force on 24 March 2011. The European Union (EU) ratified the Offshore Protocol on 29 March 2013.

6 There are fourteen (14) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention which have, up to now, ratified or acceded to the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol, whereas eight (8) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention are only Parties to the Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency ("the 1976 Emergency Protocol"). Seven (7) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention ratified the Offshore Protocol.

7 The status of ratifications of the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol, the 1976 Emergency Protocol and the Offshore Protocol to date is provided in the **Annex** to the present document.

Decisions adopted by the Eighteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols related to institutional developments

- **Follow-up on the adoption of a Five-Year Programme of Work**

8 Further to the adoption of Decision IG.19/17 on the "*Five-Year Programme of Work and indicative budget (2010-2014), and the programme of work and budget for the 2010-2011 biennium*" (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.19/8) by the Sixteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, which was held in Marrakesh, Morocco, from 3 to 5 November 2009, the Eighteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, which was convened in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 6 December 2013, agreed to extend the Five-Year Strategic and Integrated Programme of Work to 2015 and adopted Decision IG.21/17 on "*MAP Programme of Work and Budget for the 2014-2015 biennium*" (UNEP (DEPI)/MED IG.21/9) asking the MAP Secretariat with the participation of the MAP Components and in full consultation with the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, the MAP Focal Points and its partners, to prepare a Mid-Term Strategy for the period 2016-2021 for consideration and approval by the Nineteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, to be tentatively held in February 2016 in Greece.

9 The Draft Strategic Framework of the MAP's Integrated Six-Year Programme of Work for the period 2016 to 2021 ("the draft Strategic Framework"), as reproduced in document REMPEC/WG.37/INF.3, was submitted to the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points, which was convened in Athens, Greece from 19 to 21 May 2015. As detailed in document REMPEC/WG.37/15, the proposed programme of work of the Centre for the biennium 2016-2017 was prepared within the context of the draft Strategic Framework.

- **Revision of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development**

10 The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) was adopted by the Fourteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, which was held in Portorož, Slovenia, from 8 to 11 November 2005. Following the assessment of the MSSD in 2010, the Eighteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, which was convened in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 6 December 2013, decided to review the MSSD, which envisages the drafting of MSSD 2.0 (2016-2025). As a result, the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), through a consultation process, suggested six thematic areas in line with the global process to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely, seas and coasts, natural resources, climate, sustainable cities, transition towards a green economy, and governance. The MSSD review took into account existing MAP initiatives and/or instruments such as the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) roadmap, as described in Decision IG.20/4 on "*Implementing MAP ecosystem approach roadmap: Mediterranean Ecological and Operational Objectives, Indicators and Timetable for implementing the ecosystem approach roadmap*", adopted by the Seventeenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, which was held in Paris, France, from 8 to 10 February 2012 (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.20/8). The Sixteenth Meeting of the MCSD, which will take place in Marrakesh, Morocco, from 9 to 11 June 2015, will review the draft MSSD 2.0.

- **Ecosystems Approach**

11 The EcAp is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. As such, it is the guiding principle to all policy implementation and development undertaken under the auspices of the Barcelona Convention.

12 As further detailed in document REMPEC/WG.37/10, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted a number of decisions (i.e. Decision IG 17/6 on "*Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment*", Decision IG.20/4 on "*Implementing MAP ecosystem approach roadmap: Mediterranean Ecological and Operational Objectives, Indicators and Timetable for implementing the ecosystem approach roadmap*", and Decision IG.21/3 on the "*Ecosystem Approach including adopting definitions of Good Environmental Status (GES) and targets*") leading to the agreement on regionally common targets and lists of indicators to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) in the Mediterranean.

- **Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships**

13 As presented in documents REMPEC/WG.37/11/1 and REMPEC/WG.37/11/2, pursuant to Decision IG.21/17 on "*MAP Programme of Work and Budget for the 2014-2015 biennium*" (UNEP (DEPI)/MED IG.21/9) adopted by the Eighteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, which was convened in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 6 December 2013, REMPEC carried out a revision of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2005-2015) ("the 2005 Regional Strategy") adopted by the Fourteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, which was held in Portorož, Slovenia, from 8 to 11 November 2005.

14 In the framework of the revision process of the 2005 Regional Strategy, the Centre produced a Synthetic report on the Assessment of the Implementation of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2005-2015) (REMPEC/WG.36/4) and a Comparative Report on ongoing and existing Mediterranean, European and international strategies / sectorial action plans / initiatives on marine environment protection (REMPEC/WG.36/5). Based on these studies, REMPEC prepared a Draft Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021) (REMPEC/WG.36/6), which was reviewed by the Meeting of National Experts on the Revision of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships organised by REMPEC on 11 and 12 March 2015. This meeting was partly financed by a voluntary contribution from the Government of Malta to REMPEC activities. The participating Contracting Parties reviewed and agreed upon the Revised Draft Regional Strategy for

Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021), hereinafter referred to as the "Revised Draft Regional Strategy (2016-2021)", which is reproduced in Appendix I to document REMPEC/WG.37/11/1.

15 Under Agenda Item 11, the Meeting will be invited to agree upon the Revised Draft Regional Strategy (2016-2021), as may be amended during the Meeting, and to propose it for approval by the next Meeting of the MAP Focal Points scheduled in October 2015 prior to its submission for adoption by the Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, to be tentatively held in February 2016 in Greece.

16 As detailed in document REMPEC/WG.37/15, the Revised Draft Regional Strategy (2016-2021) was integrated in the MAP's Integrated Six-Year Programme of Work for the period 2016 to 2021, taking into account developments related to MSSD 2.0 and EcAp in which the Secretariat has been involved.

II. REPORT ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER RELATED ISSUES

Administrative and Financial Issues

17 As a consequence of the Extended Functional Review of the MAP System, in order to decrease the running costs of REMPEC and ensure its long-term sustainability, the Centre has undergone restructuring following the decision of the Eighteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, which was convened in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 6 December 2013.

18 In the first phase of the restructuring process, two posts in the General Service staff category were abolished and one post in the Professional staff category was downgraded from D.1 (Director) to P.5 (Head of Office) as from 1 July 2014. Consequently, Mr Frédéric Hébert (former Director), Mrs Francesca Borg (former Clerk/Secretary) and Mr Mario Bonello (former Technical Assistant/Logistics) terminated their duties at REMPEC at the end of June 2014 and Mr Jonathan Pace assumed the duties of Officer-in-Charge/Head of Office of REMPEC on 1 July 2014.

19 In the second phase of the restructuring process, three posts in the Professional staff category were downgraded: one post from P.5 to P.4 (Head of Office) and two posts from P.4 to P.3 (Programme Officer (Prevention) and Programme Officer (OPRC)). The Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) offered an alternative position, at the IMO Headquarters in London, to Mr Jonathan Pace whose position at P.5 level was abolished as from 1 February 2015. Mr Pace commenced his new duties, as Maritime Policy Development Officer within the IMO's Technical Cooperation Division, on 1 February 2015. Mr Gabino Gonzalez was entrusted by the Secretary-General of IMO with the post of Head of Office of REMPEC at P.4 level with effect from 1 February 2015.

20 The restructuring process of the Centre also provided for the recruitment of two new Programme Officers at P.3 level in order to ensure that the management of the Centre remains at the level of three Professional staff members as it was the case before the restructuring of the Centre. In this regard, Mr Franck Lauwers, joined REMPEC as Programme Officer (Prevention) at P.3 level on 9 March 2015. The duties and responsibilities of Mr Lauwers at REMPEC include a variety of technical, policy and regional regulatory duties related to marine environment protection issues and, in particular, to prevention of pollution from ships, assisting the Head of Office on policy issues regarding regional activities in that field and providing technical assistance and expert advice to the competent national authorities of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, amongst others. The recruitment of a new Programme Officer (OPRC) is ongoing and should be completed by summer 2015. Until the position is filled, Mr Gabino Gonzalez will continue to carry out the responsibilities of Programme Officer (OPRC). The Meeting will be updated on developments on the recruitment process of the new Programme Officer (OPRC) during the presentation of this agenda item.

21 Mr Pace's relocation certainly demonstrates IMO's continued commitment to REMPEC and the MAP System, as a whole, since this will significantly reduce transition costs allocated in REMPEC's MTF budget and will reduce the pressure on this year's REMPEC MTF budget. The delay in the recruitment process will also reduce the transition costs related to the restructuring of REMPEC

since budget was allocated for the position of Programme Officer (Prevention) and the position of Programme Officer (OPRC), which were expected on 1 July 2014 and 1 February 2015 respectively.

22 The Centre has also benefitted during the period under review from the support of a Junior Programme Officer financed by the French Oil Industry through the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs mechanism entitled "*Volontariat International Scientifique*". This support has been provided to the Centre since its inception. REMPEC wishes to reiterate its gratitude to the Government of France and to Total S.A. for this crucial support in particular during the transition period.

23 IMO will soon be launching the Associate Professional Officer (APO) programme, which will include a position at REMPEC. Only applications submitted through the respective IMO Member State will be considered. This position will be subject to funding by the relevant IMO Member State and the appointment will be limited to the period of funding. Contracts will be for a fixed term of one (1) year with the possibility of extension, subject to satisfactory performance, up to a total of three (3) years. IMO will not guarantee employment beyond this period of contract as an APO.

Communications with the Focal Points

24 In order to maintain good communications with the Contracting Parties, it is important that the Centre is kept updated of any changes in the designation of the various Focal Points as soon as they are appointed. In this regard, the Centre's website gives the Contracting Parties the possibility to update on line this information as well as other national information related to the core activities of the Centre.

25 In accordance with the provisions of Decision IG 17/5 on the "*Governance paper*" (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.17/10) adopted by the Fifteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, which was held in Almeria, Spain, from 15 to 18 January 2008, the Centre currently has three (3) main Focal Points in each Contracting Party:

- .1 **Governmental Focal Point:** generally an office or an officer of either the Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs or the Ministry responsible for the Environment having general responsibilities for the implementation of the provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. Ideally it should be the MAP Focal Point;
- .2 **OPRC Focal Point:** should be an office or officer of the national authority responsible for preparedness and response to accidental marine pollution, if possible designated as such in the relative National Contingency Plan (NCP); and
- .3 **Prevention Focal Point:** should be an office or officer of the national authority responsible for maritime affairs (i.e. maritime transport, shipping and related matters) dealing with prevention of pollution from ships as the matter addressed under this topic is mainly related to flag and port State duties.

26 The Centre has further focal points and channels of communication for specific issues, namely, the 24-hour Focal Points responsible for receiving reports on marine pollution accidents, the Mutual Assistance Focal Points responsible for dealing with matters related to mutual assistance in case of emergency, the Designated Representative of the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS), and the Offshore Focal Points.

27 In order to fulfil its programme of work, the Centre is regularly addressing circular letters to the Focal Points concerned, copying other Focal Points for information. It is the responsibility of the Focal Point to whom the Circular letter is addressed to coordinate and to communicate to the Centre the reply of his/her country. This channelling of information has been designed in order to promote the prompt exchange of communication while keeping all parties involved at the same time. It is important that the Contracting Parties follow this line of communication to avoid difficulties arising from multiple and uncoordinated replies which may result in delays in terms of logistical arrangements. It is also important that deadlines for nominations to participate in meetings organised by the Centre are strictly abided by, as late nominations usually translate in higher costs.

III. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

28 The following is a summary of all activities carried out by the Centre since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC.

29 As was the case in the past, the activities implemented, were financed either through:

- .1 the MTF;
- .2 the EU-funded MEDA Regional Project “*Euromed Cooperation on Maritime Safety and Prevention of Pollution from Ships – SAFEMED II*” (MED 2007/147-568) – <http://safemedproject.rempec.org/>;
- .3 the Project entitled “*Building Partnerships to Assist Developing Countries to Reduce the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms in Ships’ Ballast Water*”, also referred to as the “GloBallast Partnerships” (GBP) Project, financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), along with co-financing from countries and other international partners, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and executed by the IMO – <http://globallast.imo.org/>;
- .4 the IMO’s Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP);
- .5 the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF); or
- .6 the European Commission (EC)’s Civil Protection Financial Instrument.

30 Besides, the cost of some activities was shared with the Mediterranean Oil Industry Group (MOIG). Additional voluntary contributions from the Governments of Malta and France enabled the implementation of a number of activities, as further detailed in the present document.

Prevention of and monitoring of marine pollution from ships

31 During the period covered by the present report, REMPEC continued to build upon the achievements of the previous years in the field of prevention of pollution from ships by primarily focusing on the enhancement of the capacities of maritime administrations in the Mediterranean region with a view to ensuring the effective discharge of their flag State, port State and coastal State obligations in line with relevant international conventions.

32 Another area of activity, based on the relevant decision of the Contracting Parties, was the assistance provided to Mediterranean coastal States to prepare for the entry into force of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention).

33 Finally, the Centre continued to assist Contracting Parties with the implementation of other international marine environment protection conventions, particularly the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), and supported the establishment of MENELAS. These main focuses are further described below.

- **Maritime Administrations’ Capacity Building**

34 In the field of flag State implementation, through SAFEMED II implemented by REMPEC, various short training courses and seminars were organised. Nominees from SAFEMED II beneficiary countries also benefited from scholarship funding to attend postgraduate courses at the World Maritime University (WMU) and the IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI). Substantial resources were also devoted to raising awareness regarding the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme (VIMSAS) which assesses IMO Member States’ compliance with statutory international maritime requirements. These efforts bore fruit as four (4) SAFEMED II beneficiary countries volunteered for VIMSAS. Following the organisation of eight (8) national VIMSAS Workshops in the previous biennium, for those SAFEMED II beneficiary countries that officially volunteered for VIMSAS,

further assistance, in the form of a specific four-day workshop, a one-day high-level meeting focused on designing a strategy and a mock-audit, was provided.

35 The focus of port State control activities was on the training of Port State Control Officers (PSCOs) in the Mediterranean and on technical assistance to the Mediterranean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (Med MoU). Through SAFEMED II implemented by REMPEC, assistance for the upgrade of the Information Technology (IT) infrastructure of the Med MoU InfoCentre and the development of a decision-support tool for the Med MoU PSCOs was provided whilst laptops for the use of the PSCOs of the Med MoU members were also procured. The upgrade of the IT infrastructure of the Med MoU InfoCentre led to the Med MoU being the first Port State Control (PSC) regime to report its inspections in the applicable module of the IMO Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS), thus relieving the Med MoU members of their individual obligations to report detentions under the applicable provisions of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974 and MARPOL. An updated MED Manual on PSC Procedures was submitted to the Med MoU for consideration and was adopted by the Fourteenth Committee Meeting of the Med MoU, which was convened in Izmir, Turkey from 9 to 11 October 2012. Following an IMO tender procedure, a contract was signed with the Korean Register of Shipping (KRS) for the development of a MED MoU decision-support tool which was delivered to the Med MoU PSCOs. Meanwhile, a specific server for the Med MoU InfoCentre was purchased to host the online version of MedRules whilst software adaptations were also carried out to provide for the integration of MedRules to the Med MoU Information System (MedSIS). The MedRules were successfully presented during the Fourteenth Committee Meeting of the Med MoU. Two versions of the tool were made available to PSCOs: an online and a stand-alone version. The online version was hosted with the MedSIS. For the stand-alone version, arrangements were made to procure a laptop for the use of each PSCO of the Med MoU members that were also SAFEMED II beneficiary countries and, following an IMO tender procedure, these laptops were dispatched to the beneficiaries in December 2012.

- **Ballast Water Management**

36 Following the adoption of the Mediterranean Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management, including its Action Plan and Timetable, by the Seventeenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, which was held in Paris, France, from 8 to 10 February 2012, within the framework of the GBP and also with financial support from SAFEMED II implemented by REMPEC and the IMO's ITCP, REMPEC continued to play the role of Regional Coordinating Organisation (RCO) and assisted the Mediterranean coastal States in adhering to the Strategy by raising national awareness on the problem of aquatic invasive species primarily through the organisation of national seminars aimed at the development of National Ballast Water Management Strategies (NBWMS), as further described in document REMPEC/WG.37/7.

37 Since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, five National Training Courses / Awareness Raising Seminars on Ships' Ballast Water Management have been organised by the Centre and supported by the GBP. The seminars, which were convened in Tunisia in June 2012, Morocco in October 2012, Algeria in October 2013 and Morocco in November 2014, were financed from the IMO's ITCP. The seminar, which was held in Israel in October 2012, was funded from SAFEMED II implemented by REMPEC.

38 REMPEC also facilitated the preparation by Croatia and Turkey of their respective National Ballast Water Status Assessment, Economic Impact Assessment of the implementation of the BWM Convention and the development of their respective NBWMS.

39 Moreover, REMPEC, on behalf of the Barcelona Convention, worked closely with the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission or HELCOM) as well as the Commission of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Commission) on the development of a General Guidance on the Voluntary Application of the D1 Ballast Water Exchange Standard by Vessels Operating between the Mediterranean Sea and the North-East Atlantic and/or the Baltic Sea.

40 During the period under review, three (3) additional Mediterranean coastal States acceded to the BWM Convention, as follows: Montenegro (November 2011), Lebanon (December 2011) and Turkey (October 2014).

- **Implementation of international marine environment protection conventions, including MARPOL**

41 As in previous years, technical assistance towards the effective implementation of international maritime conventions related to the protection of the marine environment continued to play a leading role in REMPEC's activities related to prevention of pollution from ships.

42 In this regard, REMPEC's efforts focused on the issue of illicit ship pollution discharges, as further detailed in document REMPEC/WG.37/8. A second Coordinated Aerial Surveillance Operation for illicit ship pollution discharges (opération de surveillance coordonnée aérienne des rejets des navires en Méditerranée – OSCAR-MED 2013) in the Western Mediterranean was organised in Palma de Mallorca, Spain from 24 to 26 June 2013, in cooperation with the Spanish Maritime Safety Agency (SASEMAR) and with the financial support of the Government of France and the RAMOGE Agreement. In parallel to this operation, a Meeting on the Establishment of a Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL in the Mediterranean Sea was organised in Palma de Mallorca, Spain from 25 to 26 June 2013, by REMPEC together with Plan Bleu, as implementing Agency of the Regional – Governance and Knowledge generation (ReGoKo) Project funded by GEF, and with the financial support of the Government of France. Subsequently, the Eighteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, which was convened in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 6 December 2013, decided to establish MENELAS and approved its ToRs as annexed to Decision IG.21/9 on the "*Establishment of a Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention*" (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.21/9). According to the Terms of Reference (ToRs) of MENELAS, the Centre was requested to develop the internet-based MENELAS' information system. In this context, as part of the ReGoKo Project, the Project Steering Committee decided to implement a specific activity aimed at developing and maintaining a MENELAS' website, which started in March 2015 and is being implemented in close coordination with REMPEC and Plan Bleu.

43 Within the framework of the IMO's ITCP, in close cooperation with the Public Waste Agency of Flanders (OVAM) and the Port of Antwerp, REMPEC organised a Regional Workshop on Port Reception Facilities, which was held in Antwerp, Belgium, from 27 to 29 November 2012. The Workshop aimed at raising awareness on issues related to port reception facilities including *inter alia* receipt and storage of ship generated waste, downstream waste management and final disposal of this waste, as well as determining a pricing policy which creates incentives for ships to discharge in ports.

44 A National Workshop on the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships (AFS Convention), also financed through the IMO's ITCP, was organised in Istanbul, Turkey, from 18 and 19 December 2012, with a view to enhancing Turkey's capacity to implement and enforce the AFS Convention by raising awareness among key stakeholders on its requirements including *inter alia* the environmentally sound practices for the disposal of waste generated in applying and removing Anti-Fouling Systems (AFS).

45 A Regional Workshop on MARPOL Annex VI – Ship Energy Efficiency and Technology Transfer was convened in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 5 November 2014. The Workshop, which was organised in close cooperation with IMO's Marine Environment Division (MED) and hosted by the Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications of Turkey, was financed by IMO's Technical Cooperation (TC) Fund, REMPEC's MTF budget and through a voluntary contribution by the Government of Malta to REMPEC. The said Regional Workshop provided detailed information with regard to the most recent amendments to MARPOL Annex VI, namely its new Chapter 4 (Regulations on energy efficiency for ships), and the responsibilities of Parties under MARPOL. In connection with the above, discussions with the University of Malta, the Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI) and IMO took place with a view to identifying the best approach to assess the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from Mediterranean shipping activities. Due to lack of funds, the Centre has not been in a position to follow-up this activity so far.

- **Prevention of maritime accidents**

46 During the period under review, through SAFEMED II implemented by REMPEC, considerable efforts were made to enhance the capacities of Mediterranean coastal States related to the prevention of maritime accidents particularly in relation to Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) management. An extensive training programme for VTS Operators certified by the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), VTS Supervisors and VTS On-The-Job Training Instructors funded by SAFEMED II implemented by REMPEC was carried out in 2012. The training was divided into two parts, namely the 'theoretical part' of the VTS operators' course delivered through National Training Courses and the 'simulator part' carried out at recognised training centres under IALA standards. Trainees from Albania, Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Montenegro, Morocco and Tunisia attended the VTS training programme. Over one-hundred and twenty (120) participants attended the national theoretical courses and, subsequent to these courses, fifty-eight (58) eligible participants continued their studies at two recognised training centres in order to obtain the VTS Operators IALA Standard V-103/1 Certificate. Furthermore, twenty (20) of these certified VTS Operators continued with their studies and were certified as VTS Supervisors in accordance with IALA Standard V-103/2. Finally, ten (10) of these certified VTS Supervisors went on to obtain the certificate as VTS On-the-Job Training Instructors in accordance with IALA Standard V-103/4.

47 A SAFEMED II Regional Workshop on the Long-Range Identification and Tracking of Ships (LRIT), which was held in Lisbon, Portugal, from 19 to 20 March 2012, was organised in cooperation with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and IMO to *inter alia* familiarise Mediterranean trainees with the LRIT legal and technical requirements.

Preparedness and Response

48 Since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, the Centre has continuously supported Mediterranean coastal States in enhancing their level of preparedness and their response capacity to oil and chemical spills at sea. The activities implemented by the Centre were consistent with past accomplishments and covered the key elements composing efficient response systems, including the development of tools for oil spill risk assessment, the development and maintenance of national contingency planning, the support of regional cooperation, the organisation of capacity building activities, the participation in national and sub-regional oil spill response exercises, and the upgrade of the Regional Information System (RIS).

- **Risk Assessment**

49 Following the decision of the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, the Centre, in cooperation with MOIG and with the participation of the IPIECA – The global oil and gas industry association for environmental and social issues, organised a Regional Workshop on Oil Spill Risk Assessment in the Mediterranean Sea ("MEDEXPOL 2011") in Barcelona, Spain from 29 November to 1 December 2011. The recommendations were integrated in the three-year EU-Funded Mediterranean Decision Support System for Marine Safety Project (MEDESS-4MS) – <http://www.medess4ms.eu/> – co-financed by the ERDF, which was implemented by REMPEC from February 2012 to 31 March 2015. As further detailed in documents REMPEC/WG.37/10 and REMPEC/WG.37/14/1, the main outcomes resulting from the contribution of the Centre as partner of the MEDESS-4MS Project, and with the cooperation of the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG), were:

- .1 the development of the "*Mediterranean Integrated Geographical Information System on Marine Pollution Risk Assessment and Response*" (MEDGIS-MAR), now accessible from <http://medgismar.rempec.org/>;
- .2 the development of a sustainable integrated operational multi-model oil spill prediction service in the Mediterranean Sea connected to existing monitoring platforms, using well established oil spill models, data from the Marine Core Services, and national oceanographic forecasting systems, accessible through the MEDESS-4MS User Interface: http://medess-dss.bo.ingv.it/joomla_medess/index.php/en/; and

- .3 the testing of the multi-model service during a real scale annual pollution exercise carried out within the framework of the “Saint RApHaël MONaco GENes POLLution” (RAMOGEPOL) plan, organised by the Ministry of the Environment and Protection of Land and Sea of Italy in cooperation with the Governments of France, Monaco and Spain, which was convened in Portoferraio, Island of Elba, Italy, from 16 to 17 September 2014.

- **Contingency Planning**

50 A realistic risk assessment will assist Mediterranean coastal States in reviewing or developing their national system to respond to oil and chemical spills at sea. In this field, Montenegro adopted its National Contingency Plan (NCP) on 28 May 2011 following the support provided by REMPEC. During the period under review, Albania and Cyprus also requested REMPEC to assist them in the development and revision of their NCPs respectively. Following the organisation of the National Workshop on Contingency Planning and Table Top Exercise, which was held in Durres, Albania, from 5 to 7 July 2011, an action plan for the finalisation of the NCP of Albania was agreed upon and led to the adoption of the NCP on 25 July 2012. Concerning Cyprus, at the time of writing this report, the final draft NCP, which was partially based on information provided by the Department of Merchant Shipping of Cyprus and prepared with the assistance of the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Limited (ITOPF), was submitted for approval and is expected to be adopted shortly. Moreover, the adoption of the National and Regional Contingency Plans of Turkey were officially announced on 29 September 2011 during a ceremony attended by REMPEC.

51 With the adoption of the NCPs of Albania, Montenegro and Turkey, only three (3) Contracting Parties remain without an operational NCP, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Libya and Lebanon. Since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, the Centre has continuously been working towards reducing this gap by implementing additional activities and providing assistance. For security reasons, which prevented any development, the proposed activity in Libya was postponed. The Centre is currently in discussion with Lebanon for the provision of technical assistance to be financed by the IMO's ITCP and implemented by REMPEC with a view to finalising the development of its NCP. In October 2013, REMPEC met the competent authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina in view of the possible set up of an official and operational agreement between, on the one hand, Bosnia and Herzegovina and, on the other hand, Croatia relating to preparedness for and response to major marine pollution incidents.

52 The provision of technical assistance for the establishment of a National Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) Response System in Egypt, financed by the IMO's ITCP and implemented by REMPEC with the support of the Centre of Documentation, Research and Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution (Cedre), was initiated by a fact-finding mission carried out from 8 to 12 February 2015 and concluded by a meeting convened on 7 June 2015 in Cairo, Egypt, where the outcome of the mission and related recommendations were presented.

53 REMPEC attended the Information Day organised by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on 10 April 2014 in Rota, Spain and provided relevant information on the legal background and on the existing response system in place in the region in case of an incident to the authority in charge of the contingency plan of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Destruction Programme. During the preparation and implementation of the said Programme, the Centre was in contact with IMO, UNEP, MAP and OPCW with a view to ensuring that detailed information on the Syrian Chemical Weapons Destruction Programme was available to respond accurately to any request of information made.

- **Sub-regional Cooperation**

54 During the period under review, the Agreement concerning the Sub-Regional Contingency Plan for Preparedness for and Response to Accidental Marine Pollution in the South-Western Mediterranean signed in June 2005 by Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia entered into force on 19 May 2011, following its ratification by Morocco. This brought the number of sub-regional agreements on preparedness for and response to accidental marine pollution in force in the Mediterranean to three (3), including the Lion Plan between France and Spain as well as the RAMOGE Agreement (Accord

Relatif à la Protection de l'environnement Marin et Côtier d'une zone de la Mer Méditerranée) between Italy, Monaco and France, which was revised in 2012.

55 Although, in previous years, REMPEC had supported the organisation of the annual Meeting of the operational competent authorities in charge of the implementation of the Agreement concerning Sub-Regional Contingency Plan for Preparedness for and Response to Accidental Marine Pollution in the South-Western Mediterranean, no such meeting took place during the period under review. The project proposal, presented in document REMPEC/WG.37/9, should be an opportunity to reactivate the dialogue between the Parties concerned.

56 It should be noted that the Agreement on the Sub-regional Contingency Plan for Prevention of, Preparedness for and Response to Major Marine Pollution Incidents in the Adriatic Sea signed in December 2005 by Croatia, Italy and Slovenia and the Agreement on the Sub-regional Contingency Plan for Preparedness and Response to Major Marine Pollution Incidents in the Mediterranean, signed in 1995 by Cyprus, Egypt and Israel, have not yet entered into force since, in each case, one Party to the respective agreement, has not yet ratified the said agreement.

57 During the Adriatic Spill Conference on spill prevention, preparedness and response (ADRIASPILLCON 2013), which was held in Opatija, Croatia, from 14 and 16 May 2013, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Montenegro expressed their interest in further cooperating through the current Agreement on the Sub-regional Contingency Plan for Prevention of, Preparedness for and Response to Major Marine Pollution Incidents in the Adriatic Sea. The participation of representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Montenegro to this event was financed by the IMO's ITCP and was coordinated by REMPEC.

58 REMPEC also assisted the implementation of projects involving sub-regional cooperation, such as the MEDESS-4MS Project as well as the Project for Preparedness for Oil-polluted Shoreline clean-up and Oiled Wildlife interventions (POSOW) further described below.

- **Capacity Building**

59 To ensure prompt and efficient response, training and practice are essential in any field, in particular when dealing with an emergency situation. During the period under review, specialised training events were organised on oil spill waste management, oil spill claim management, oil spill volunteer management and on the Protocol of 2010 to the International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea, 1996 ("the 2010 HNS Protocol").

60 Following the endorsement of the Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Guidelines and the Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Decision Support Tool by the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, a National Pilot Training Course on Oil Spill Waste Management was organised in Israel from 19 to 21 September 2011. Building on the lessons learnt from this first training course, it was replicated in Tunisia from 8 to 10 May 2012, with the financial support and participation of MOIG and the IMO's ITCP. Both training courses aimed at providing theoretical knowledge on the subject and at learning how to use the online tool in practical terms by completing and entering data.

61 Following a request by the Parties to the Agreement concerning the Sub-Regional Contingency Plan for Preparedness for and Response to Accidental Marine Pollution in the South-Western Mediterranean, REMPEC organised, in collaboration with IMO, the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds), MOIG and the "Société Anonyme Marocaine de l'Industrie du Raffinage" (SAMIR), a Sub-regional Workshop on Claims Management for Arab Speaking Countries and a Technical Session on Assistance Support Cost and Reimbursement, which were convened in Mohammedia, Morocco, from 28 to 30 November 2012. The Workshop, financed through the IMO's ITCP, provided knowledge on the related international conventions and their transposition into national legislation, claims management, eligibility of claims and presentation procedures also through practical sessions. The Technical Session concluded with a set of recommendations.

62 A Regional Training Course on the 2010 HNS Protocol funded through SAFEMED II, was organised by REMPEC in Malta from 12 to 13 December 2012, in close cooperation with the IOPC

Funds and ITOPF. The training course familiarised the participants with the International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea, 1996, as amended by the 2010 HNS Protocol, the necessary preparations for the ratification of the 2010 HNS Protocol and highlighted best practices on implementation, including national legislation and ratification as well as transitional provisions.

63 REMPEC coordinated the two-year EU-funded Project for Preparedness for Oil-polluted Shoreline clean-up and Oiled Wildlife interventions (POSOW) – <http://www.posow.org/> – co-financed by the EU under the EC's Civil Protection Financial Instrument between 2012 and 2013 ("POSOW I"), which supported the establishment of a regional cooperation synergy in the field of marine pollution through the enhancement of knowledge and capacities of professional and volunteer operators working in civil protection services, in municipalities and in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), in the European Mediterranean coastal States, namely Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Slovenia and Spain.

64 POSOW I benefited from the collaboration between the Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale (ISPRA), Cedre, the Sea Alarm Foundation, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) and REMPEC. In addition, POSOW I gathered twenty-three (23) partners, mainly from NGOs, representing eight (8) beneficiary countries from fifteen (15) regions and four (4) external partners. The Project addressed four (4) main themes namely, Oiled Shoreline Assessment, Oiled Shoreline Clean-up, Oil Spill Volunteer Management and Oiled Wildlife Response and published four (4) manuals, eleven (11) posters as well as a set of Microsoft PowerPoint presentations on these themes with a view to facilitating training courses. To ensure full understanding of the material developed under the Project, the posters and Microsoft PowerPoint presentations were translated and published in Croatian, English, French, Greek, Italian, Slovenian and Spanish. Two hundred and fifty-two (252) volunteers and professionals were trained in nine (9) regions, thirty-four (34) trainers from fourteen (14) different regions were trained to transfer the acquired knowledge in their respective regions and two-hundred and seventy-six (276) volunteers and trainers were registered in the POSOW Volunteers' Database.

65 Following the success of POSOW I, a project proposal coordinated by Cedre aimed at expanding the achievements of POSOW I to Mediterranean coastal States that are part of the European Neighbourhood Policy as well as Enlargement countries, namely Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey, was approved and was launched in January 2015. The two-year Project, co-financed by the EU under the EC's Civil Protection Financial Instrument between 2015 and 2016 ("POSOW II") is coordinated by Cedre, in cooperation with REMPEC, ISPRA, the Instituto Portuario de Estudios y Cooperación de la Comunidad Valenciana (FEPORIS), the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) and the General Directorate of Maritime and Inland Waters of Turkey (DG-MARINWA). Two additional themes are covered in POSOW II, namely the oil spill waste management and the involvement of local fishermen in marine oil spill response operations.

66 As a continuation of POSOW I, a National Training on preparedness for oil-polluted shoreline clean-up and oiled wildlife interventions, financed by the IMO's ITCP, was organised by REMPEC in Algiers, Algeria, from 27 to 29 October 2014, in close cooperation with the Algerian national competent authorities.

- **Exercises**

67 Since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, the Centre has been invited to assist or participate in several exercises, which were mainly focused on oil-spill response, as listed below:

- .1 TEL-BAHR 2011, 10 May 2011, Skikda, Algeria;
- .2 DEEP SEA, 2-3 June 2011, Israel;
- .3 MALTEX 2011, 14 September 2011, Malta;
- .4 Istanbul Oil Spill National Exercise, 28 September 2011, Istanbul, Turkey;

- .5 RAMOGEPOL HAVEN 2011, 24 October 2011, Genoa, Italy;
- .6 MALTEX 2012, 11-12 September 2012, Malta;
- .7 ADRIATIC 2012, 25-26 September 2012, Durres, Albania;
- .8 SIMULPOL 2012, 16-17 October 2012, Oran and Arzew, Algeria;
- .9 TIFANI, 22-23 October 2012, Haifa, Israel;
- .10 POLLUX 2013, 15-19 April 2013, Trieste, Italy;
- .11 MALTEX 2013, 17-18 September 2013, Malta;
- .12 RAMOGEPOL 2013, 9-10 October 2013, France;
- .13 NEMESIS-2014, 10 April 2014, Israel;
- .14 SIMULEX 2014, 18 June 2014, Morocco;
- .15 MALTEX 2014, 2-3 September 2014, Malta; and
- .16 RAMOGEPOL 2014, 16-17 September 2014, Portoferraio, Island of Elba, Italy.

68 When possible, the Centre attended these exercises and sponsored the attendance of an expert from another Mediterranean coastal State, as was decided at the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC. Reports of findings were also disseminated to the Parties concerned.

- **Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU)**

69 Within the framework of the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU), the arrangements with Cedre, the Federazione Nazionale dell'Industria Chimica (FEDERCHIMICA), ISPRA, the Sea Alarm Foundation and the Mediterranean Operational Network for the Global Ocean Observing System (MONGOOS – former MOON) were tested in some of the above-mentioned exercises.

70 The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) within the framework of the MAU between the Sea Alarm Foundation and REMPEC as well as that between Cedre and REMPEC were extended, whilst the extensions of the MoU between ISPRA and REMPEC and that between FEDERCHIMICA and REMPEC have been delayed so far, pending discussion to take place during summer 2015. The extension of the MoU between MONGOOS and REMPEC was agreed and is currently being formalised.

71 The MAU was activated for real emergencies during the period under review, as follows:

- .1 in January 2012, following the grounding of the “COSTA CONCORDIA”, MONGOOS was requested to provide forecasting models in the framework of the MAU that had been activated;
- .2 in March 2014, at the request of the Maltese authorities, REMPEC activated the MAU through MONGOOS to run oil spill simulations in the event of the possible bombing of the MT MORNING GLORY; and
- .3 in December 2014, when Israel requested the activation of the MAU to deal with a breached pipeline in Eilat, both Cedre and ISPRA provided the Centre with relevant technical advice, which REMPEC consolidated and forwarded to the Israeli authorities, whilst the Egyptian competent authorities were kept informed about the situation, including the possible spillage into the Red Sea.

Tools, information and communication

72 Since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, the Centre has continued to improve the availability of online information on its website – www.rempec.org. The online system also makes available all training material, guidelines and tools that provides assistance to the Contracting Parties in the implementation of the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol. A description of the work carried out by the Centre in the field of data sharing, monitoring and reporting is further detailed in document REMPEC/WG.37/10.

73 As instructed by the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, the Centre took the necessary measures to update the RIS' reference system and content. The Guidelines for the Use of Dispersants for Combating Oil Pollution at Sea in the Mediterranean Region and the Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Guidelines were translated into French. Moreover, the Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment were translated into Spanish thanks to the Department of Environment, the Directorate General for the Sustainability of the Coast and the Sea and the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food of Spain, and in Arabic with the assistance of the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA).

74 As detailed in document REMPEC/WG.37/14/1, the MTWG assisted in the upgrading of the Maritime Integrated Decision Support Information System on Transport of Chemical Substances (MIDSIS-TROCS) – <http://midsis.rempec.org/>, the Version 3.0 of which was published online in January 2012. The database on alerts and accidents in the Mediterranean Sea and the related Geographical Information System (GIS) and statistical analysis are updated regularly, through the Centre's website. The Centre integrated the database in the MEDGIS-MAR platform described in document REMPEC/WG.37/10. Since the first data entry in the database on alerts and accidents in the Mediterranean Sea, following the accident involving the AGIP VENEZIA on 13 August 1977, REMPEC's database has registered seven hundred and ninety-eight (798) entries, one hundred and twenty-two (122) of which correspond to pollution events superior to seven (7) tons of released pollutant (oil and/or HNS).

75 Tutorial videos on MIDSIS-TROCS and the Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Decision Support Tool, as well as a video on POSOW were published on REMPEC's website. The news items are regularly refreshed and updated, ensuring an up-to-date flow of information. The results of the projects undertaken by REMPEC are communicated regularly by updating the relevant part of the REMPEC's website and by relaying the information to MAP for inclusion on its website.

Offshore Protocol

76 As further described in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.417/5/Corr.1, following Decision IG 20/12 on the "*Action Plan to implement the Protocol of the Barcelona Convention concerning the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil*" (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.20/8), adopted by the Seventeenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, which was held in Paris, France, from 8 to 10 February 2012, the MAP Secretariat, in cooperation with REMPEC, established an *ad-hoc* working group coordinated by REMPEC to prepare a draft action plan with a view to facilitating the effective implementation of the Offshore Protocol.

77 The MAP Secretariat, with the support of REMPEC, organised the First Offshore Protocol Working Group Meeting, which was convened in Valletta, Malta, from 13 to 14 June 2013. REMPEC carried out an assessment of the practical measures on offshore activities at the Mediterranean level as well as an analysis of the existing international rules, standards, and recommended practices and procedures relevant to the implementation of the Offshore Protocol (REMPEC/WG.34/19/Rev.1), which were presented at the Second Offshore Protocol Working Group Meeting held in Athens, Greece, from 10 to 12 December 2013.

78 The draft Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan in the framework of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (REMPEC/WG.35/4), hereinafter referred to as the "Draft Offshore Protocol Action Plan", submitted to the Third Offshore Protocol Working Group Meeting, which was convened in Attard, Malta, from 17 to 18 June 2014, was prepared by REMPEC

taking into account the findings of the studies and the recommendations made by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention during the above-mentioned process.

79 The Reviewed Draft Offshore Protocol Action Plan reproduced in Annex IV to the Report of the Third Offshore Protocol Working Group Meeting (REMPEC/WG.35/6), presented in Annex I to document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.417/5/Corr.1, was agreed upon by the said meeting and submitted to the Fourth Meeting of the EcAp Coordination Group and to the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points, which were held in Athens, Greece, from 9 to 10 October 2014 and from 19 to 21 May 2015 respectively, for their consideration.

80 The Reviewed Draft Offshore Protocol Action Plan will also be discussed during the joint session that the Meeting will have with the meeting of MED POL Focal Points on 17 June 2015, prior to the submission of the Final Offshore Protocol Action Plan for approval by the next Meeting of the MAP Focal Points scheduled in October 2015 and for adoption by the Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, to be tentatively held in February 2016 in Greece.

Actions requested by the Meeting

81 **The Meeting is invited to:**

- .1 **take note** of the information provided in the present document; and
- .2 **comment**, as appropriate.